

SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS

24-Hour Emergency Management – The IDOT Communications Center is open around the clock to receive incident, disaster and emergency-related calls. As necessary, the Communications Center notifies duty officers when action has to be taken by IDOT staff. Duty officers report to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Operations Center to represent the department in coordination of multi-agency responses to disasters.

Disaster Recovery – The IDOT emergency services team is well-trained to respond to life-threatening incidents and to coordinate services in the aftermath of disasters or emergency situations. In the past year, IDOT teams provided a variety of resources to relieve communities from both natural and manmade disasters. We also work consistently with national and Illinois Homeland Security experts in mock-disaster training and exercises to ensure that Illinois remains among the leaders in security issues.

Here is a synopsis of the disaster relief work we were involved with in the past year:

Tornado Disaster – Kankakee, LaSalle, Putnam and Will counties – Granville, Joliet and Utica – IDOT provided heavy equipment and manpower for more than two weeks in assisting the town of Utica. April 20, 2004.

Formosa Chemical Plant explosion – Illiopolis – IDOT provided manpower and resources to assist in shutting down I-72 east and westbound for traffic safety, along with debris removal. April 23, 2004.

Flooding – Lake County – IDOT assisted in transporting 200,000 sandbags to Lake County and provided 300 feet of concrete barrier walls to help contain flooding. May 23, 2004.

Tornado Disaster – Hardin, Morgan, Pike and Scott counties – IDOT provided heavy equipment and manpower for more than three weeks following this disaster. May 24-26, 2004.

Tornado Disaster – Village of Roanoke – Tornado damage with winds of more than 200 miles per hour damaged the area and caused power outages. IDOT assisted with heavy equipment and debris removal on U.S. Routes 116 and 117. July 13, 2004.

Snow Emergency – Clark, Crawford, Lawrence, Wabash, White, Gallatin, Hardin, Pope, and Massac counties – IDOT provided manpower and equipment from three southern Illinois districts to clear roadways and keep open the Interstate highway system in Illinois. Expressway systems in Missouri and Indiana were closed during these storms. Illinois Interstate highways were kept open and passable throughout the storm.



Homeland Security – In addition to participating in federal and multi-state training exercises and workshops to plan for response to Homeland Security threats or incidents, IDOT helps train state and local emergency and disaster response teams in a variety of areas. IDOT also purchased two Vehicle and Cargo Inspection Systems, mobile gamma ray technology that is designed to help federal and state officials physically inspect large cargo containers through a system similar to X-ray systems used to inspect baggage at airports.



CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

IDOT is utilizing its Context Sensitive Solutions initiative to involve community-based stakeholders early and often in the planning and design processes as transportation projects that will affect their areas are announced. The extensive stakeholder involvement in planning decisions surrounding transportation improvements can help IDOT make project decisions and designs based on the best available information about community needs and impacts.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING SERVICES

The department continues to work with our 14 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) partners to improve the regional planning processes. This will ensure the development of safe, integrated multimodal transportation systems throughout the state. Current goals are:

- promoting Context Sensitive Solutions in planning activities,
- promoting safety planning principals, and
- improving integrated land use and transportation planning.

CHICAGO AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (CATS)

The MPO for the greater Chicago region is the Chicago Area Transportation Study, also known as CATS, a planning branch of IDOT. CATS is responsible, together with IDOT, local governments and transit operators, for planning transportation improvements, and ensuring the region's eligibility to receive qualifying federal surface transportation funding.

Three major products result from this planning work:

- the Regional Transportation Plan provides public policy direction and guidance for the continued development of a safe, efficient multi-modal surface transportation system in northeastern Illinois,
- the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is northeastern Illinois' agenda of surface transportation projects. The TIP outlines federally funded projects and other regionally significant projects planned for implementation in the upcoming years,

- the Unified Work Program provides a detailed description of all transportation-related planning activities anticipated within the metropolitan area.

CATS' Rideshare Services are designed to reduce the number of vehicles commuting on area highways. These services are offered free to employers and the commuting public at large, including:

- support for individuals in carpools and vanpool formation,
- support for employers in developing rideshare programs,
- employer Rideshare Coordinator Training,
- promotional assistance and information,
- coordination with other transportation service providers, and
- carpool and vanpool matching services on the Internet.

CATS' voluntary regional rideshare programs have operated since 1980. Some 300 employers and 30,000 individual applicants over the years have been assisted in forming carpools and vanpools. Rideshare Services is part of CATS Transportation Management Division.

CATS' annual budget averages about \$5 million but can vary based on the planning studies undertaken.

The CATS' staff is focusing on three emphasis areas to improve regional planning in north-eastern Illinois: integrating bike and pedestrian needs into planning, safety-conscious planning, and full participation of the Council of Mayors in order to attract and maintain local involvement in planning.



TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES

IDOT operates the most sophisticated transportation technology system in the United States, integrated to monitor and manage traffic, respond quickly and safely to incidents, provide quality and timely information to the traveling public, and aid in improving the safety of work zones.

Technology plays an important role in relieving traffic congestion. This technology takes the form of:

- Traffic detectors on more than 160 miles of Chicago expressways to monitor traffic volumes, speeds and congestion on pavements.
- Ramp meters that monitor traffic conditions to improve traffic flow.
- Changeable electronic message signs and highway advisory radio stations to inform motorists instantly of changes in conditions and other vital information.
- Closed circuit television cameras to be able to quickly identify and respond to potential congestion-causing incidents.
- Highway service patrols, available around the clock to assist motorists and return the roadway to full capacity and reduce delays.

The department's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) activities include:

- Operating the gcmtravel.com site which provides information regarding traffic conditions on the expressways and tollways, along with transit information and airport information. This travel site receives up to 6 million hits from travelers every month. This helps travelers plan their trips more effectively and avoid congestion.
- Operating 75 changeable electronic message signs in the Chicago area and throughout the state to provide motorists with current congestion information, estimated travel times,



incident and construction information to help motorists make better traveling decisions while on the roadways.

- Operating more than 35 cameras on the Chicago expressway system, which provides live images from nine construction-zone cameras to the traveling public on the gcmtravel website. IDOT is adding cameras to the system and are reviewing proposals to provide additional video images via the Internet.
- Emergency Traffic Patrol (Minutemen) -- IDOT provides assistance to stranded motorists in order to help them on their way, to clear the roadway and allow traffic to flow freely. During 2004, more than 100,000 motorists were helped in northeastern Illinois as well as more than 10,000 in the Metro-East area.
- The Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS), in coordination with IDOT, is working to relieve traffic congestion in northeast Illinois by monitoring and evaluating causes of regional traffic congestion, promoting ridesharing and working with local and state agencies to develop innovative solutions to better operate and manage transportation systems.

As a result of IDOT's ITS technology, Chicago is one of very few metropolitan areas where state-of-the-art technologies are operated as an integrated system giving travelers the full benefits of cooperation in traffic management, incident management, safety engineering, and operations and maintenance.

The success stories are real. No other large metropolitan area has the quality or quantity of current information on congestion and travel times that IDOT now makes available in Chicago, routinely and continuously, to the media and individual travelers. This means area motorists know better what to expect on the road ahead and can use this information to make better informed, safer and more effective trip choices.

At the same time, the Emergency Traffic Patrol is the model of highway service and motorist assistance services designed to save time, lives and money for travelers in Chicago and Metro-East St. Louis areas.

Illinois has received an average of \$4 million annually in federal ITS deployment funds which are matched by state ITS funds. These funds have been used to develop and deploy systems and services in each IDOT highway district across Illinois and to support transit and commercial vehicle operations and their use of technology.

Several additional innovations are scheduled to appear in the coming year:

- All of IDOT's camera images are to be made available to the public.
- IDOT will significantly enhance current information on the website by adding historic travel times so that commuters can compare current times with typical times for their trips.
- Current information on the overhead message signs will be added to the website.
- E-mail notification of traffic conditions for personalized routes will be made available.
- Emergency Traffic Patrol vehicles will be equipped with automated vehicle location and mobile data terminals to more quickly get incident information to the responders and to the public.

IDOT currently operates 24 changeable message signs and plans to add 4 to 6 more as part of the Dan Ryan, Kingery and Bishop Ford expressway construction projects, for motorists traveling to and from the Loop.

